



United States Access Board

Laws Concerning the Access Board

**Architectural Barriers Act of 1968
Section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990**

**U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board
(Access Board)**

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Introduction

This is a compilation of the laws which affect the United States Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board). Over the years, all of the Access Board's activities have had a single goal: to enable persons with disabilities to live and work in society. If persons with disabilities are to be able to live and work alongside their peers without disabilities, then the built environment must be designed and constructed to accommodate the needs of everyone.

This publication contains three laws. The first is the **Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA)**, as amended, which mandates that buildings or other facilities financed with certain Federal funds are accessible to persons with disabilities. The second law in this publication is **Section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, as amended, which establishes and sets out the functions of the Access Board. Finally, this document includes the section of the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**, which significantly expanded the role of the Access Board. Under the ADA, the Access Board is responsible for developing accessibility guidelines for entities covered by the Act and for providing technical assistance to individuals and organizations on the removal of architectural, transportation, and communication barriers.

These three laws form the basis for building an accessible environment for all people. The Access Board remains committed to achieving this goal, as reflected in the agency's mission statement: "Enhance the quality of life by ensuring accessibility and broadening public awareness that access makes economic and practical sense for all."

May 1994



**Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended
(Public Law 90-480)
42 U.S.C. §§ 4151 *et seq.***

§ 4151. Definitions

As used in this chapter, the term "building" means any building or facility (other than (A) a privately owned residential structure not leased by the Government for subsidized housing programs and (B) any building or facility on a military installation designed and constructed primarily for use by able bodied military personnel) the intended use for which either will require that such building or facility be accessible to the public, or may result in the employment or residence therein of physically handicapped persons, which building or facility is--

- (1) to be constructed or altered by or on behalf of the United States;
- (2) to be leased in whole or in part by the United States after August 12, 1968;
- (3) to be financed in whole or in part by a grant or a loan made by the United States after August 12, 1968, if such building or facility is subject to standards for design, construction, or alteration issued under authority of the law authorizing such grant or loan; or
- (4) to be constructed under authority of the National Capital Transportation Act of 1960, the National Capital Transportation Act of 1965, or title III of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Regulation Compact.

§ 4152. Standards for design, construction, and alteration of buildings; Secretary of Health and Human Services

The Administrator of General Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall prescribe standards for the design, construction, and alteration of buildings (other than residential structures subject to this chapter and buildings, structures, and facilities of the Department of Defense and of the United States Postal Service subject to this chapter) to insure whenever possible that physically handicapped persons will have ready access to, and use of, such buildings.

§ 4153. Standards for design, construction, and alteration of buildings; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall prescribe standards for the design, construction, and alteration of buildings which are residential structures subject to this chapter to insure whenever possible that physically handicapped persons will have ready access to, and use of, such buildings.

§ 4154. Standards for design, construction, and alteration of buildings; Secretary of Defense

The Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall prescribe standards for the design, construction, and alteration of buildings, structures, and facilities of the Department of Defense subject to this chapter to insure whenever possible that physically handicapped persons will have ready access to, and use of, such buildings.

§ 4154a. Standards for design, construction, and alteration of buildings; United States Postal Service

The United States Postal Service, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall prescribe such standards for the design, construction, and alteration of its buildings to insure whenever possible that physically handicapped persons will have ready access to, and use of, such buildings.

§ 4155. Effective date of standards

Every building designed, constructed, or altered after the effective date of a standard issued under this chapter which is applicable to such building, shall be designed, constructed, or altered in accordance with such standard.

§ 4156. Waiver and modification of standards

The Administrator of General Services, with respect to standards issued under section 4152 of this title, and the United States Postal Service with respect to standards issued under section 4154a of this title, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, with respect to standards issued under section 4153 of this title, and the Secretary of Defense with respect to standards issued under section 4154 of this title, --

(1) is authorized to modify or waive any such standard, on a case-by-case basis, upon application made by the head of the department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States concerned, and upon a determination by the Administrator or Secretary, as the case may be, that such modification or waiver is clearly necessary, and

(2) shall establish a system of continuing surveys and investigations to insure compliance with such standards.

§ 4157. Reports to Congress and congressional committees

(a) The Administrator of General Services shall report to Congress during the first week of January of each year on his activities and those of other departments, agencies, and

instrumentalities of the Federal Government under this chapter during the preceding fiscal year including, but not limited to, standards issued, revised, amended, or repealed under this chapter and all case-by-case modifications, and waivers of such standards during such year.

(b) The Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board established by section 792 of Title 29 shall report to the Public Works and Transportation Committee of the House of Representatives and the Public Works Committee of the Senate during the first week of January of each year on its activities and actions to insure compliance with the standards prescribed under this chapter.



**Section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
(Public Law 93-112)
29 U.S.C. § 792**

§ 792. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board

(a) Establishment; membership; Chairperson; vice-chairperson; term of office; termination of membership; reappointment; compensation and travel expenses; bylaws; quorum requirements

(1) There is established within the Federal Government the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Access Board") which shall be composed as follows:

(A) Thirteen members shall be appointed by the President from among members of the general public of whom at least a majority shall be individuals with disabilities.

(B) The remaining members shall be the heads of each of the following departments or agencies (or their designees whose positions are executive level IV or higher):

- (i) Department of Health and Human Services.
- (ii) Department of Transportation.
- (iii) Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- (iv) Department of Labor.
- (v) Department of the Interior.
- (vi) Department of Defense.
- (vii) Department of Justice
- (viii) General Services Administration.
- (ix) Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (x) United States Postal Service.
- (xi) Department of Education.
- (xii) Department of Commerce.

The Chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Access Board shall be elected by majority vote of the members of the Access Board to serve for terms of one year. When the chairperson is a member of the general public, the vice-chairperson shall be a Federal official; and when the chairperson is a Federal official, the vice-chairperson shall be a member of the general public. Upon the expiration of the term as chairperson of a member who is a Federal official, the subsequent chairperson shall be a member of the general public; and vice versa.

(2)(A) (i) The term of office of each appointed member of the Access Board shall be 4 years, except as provided in clause (ii). Each year, the terms of office of at least three appointed members of the board shall expire.

(ii)(I) One member appointed for a term beginning December 4, 1992 shall serve for a term of 3 years.

(II) One member appointed for a term beginning December 4, 1993 shall serve for a term of 2 years.

(III) One member appointed for a term beginning December 4, 1994 shall serve for a term of 1 year.

(IV) Members appointed for terms beginning before December 4, 1992 shall serve for terms of 3 years.

(B) A member whose term has expired may continue to serve until a successor has been appointed.

(C) A member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the term to which that member's predecessor was appointed.

(3) If any appointed member of the Access Board becomes a Federal employee, such member may continue as a member of the Access Board for not longer than the sixty-day period beginning on the date the member becomes a Federal employee.

(4) No individual appointed under paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection who has served as a member of the Access Board may be reappointed to the Access Board more than once unless such individual has not served on the Access Board for a period of two years prior to the effective date of such individual's appointment.

(5)(A) Members of the Access Board who are not regular full-time employees of the United States shall, while serving on the business of the Access Board, be entitled to receive compensation at rates fixed by the President, but not to exceed the daily equivalent of the rate of pay for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of Title 5, including travel time, for each day they are engaged in the performance of their duties as members of the Access Board; and shall be entitled to reimbursement for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by them in carrying out their duties under this section.

(B) Members of the Access Board who are employed by the Federal Government shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by them in carrying out their duties under this section.

(6)(A) The Access Board shall establish such bylaws and other rules as may be appropriate to enable the Access Board to carry out its functions under this chapter.

(B) The bylaws shall include quorum requirements. The quorum requirements shall provide that (i) a proxy may not be counted for purposes of establishing a quorum, and (ii) not less than half the members required for a quorum shall be members of the general public appointed under paragraph (1)(A).

(b) Functions

It shall be the function of the Access Board to --

(1) ensure compliance with the standards prescribed pursuant to the Act entitled "An Act to ensure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; (42 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.) (including the application of such Act to the United States Postal Service), including enforcing all standards under such Act, and ensuring that all waivers and modifications to the standards are based on findings of fact and are not inconsistent with the provisions of this section;

(2) develop advisory guidelines for, and provide appropriate technical assistance to, individuals or entities with rights or duties under regulations prescribed pursuant to this subchapter or titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq. and 12181 et seq.) with respect to overcoming architectural, transportation, and communication barriers;

(3) establish and maintain minimum guidelines and requirements for the standards issued pursuant to the Act commonly known as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 [42 U.S.C.A. § 4151 et seq.] and titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [42 U.S.C.A. § 12131 et seq. and § 12181 et seq.];

(4) promote accessibility throughout all segments of society;

(5) investigate and examine alternative approaches to the architectural, transportation, communication, and attitudinal barriers confronting individuals with disabilities, particularly with respect to telecommunications devices, public buildings and monuments, parks and parklands, public transportation (including air, water, and surface transportation, whether interstate, foreign, intrastate, or local), and residential and institutional housing;

(6) determine what measures are being taken by Federal, State, and local governments and by other public or nonprofit agencies to eliminate the barriers described in paragraph (5);

(7) promote the use of the International Accessibility Symbol in all public facilities that are in compliance with the standards prescribed by the Administrator of General Services, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development pursuant to the Act commonly known as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 [42 U.S.C.A. § 4151 et seq.];

(8) make to the President and to the Congress reports that shall describe in detail the results of its investigations under paragraphs (5) and (6);

(9) make to the President and to the Congress such recommendations for legislative and administrative changes as the Access Board determines to be necessary or desirable to eliminate the barriers described in paragraph (5); and

(10) ensure that public conveyances, including rolling stock, are readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with physical disabilities.

(c) Additional functions; transportation barriers and housing needs; transportation and housing plans and proposals

The Access Board shall also (1)(A) determine how and to what extent transportation barriers impede the mobility of individuals with disabilities and aged individuals with disabilities and consider ways in which travel expenses in connection with transportation to and from work for individuals with disabilities can be met or subsidized when such individuals are unable to use mass transit systems or need special equipment in private transportation, and (B) consider the housing needs of individuals with disabilities; (2) determine what measures are being taken, especially by public and other nonprofit agencies and groups having an interest in and a capacity to deal with such problems, (A) to eliminate barriers from public transportation systems (including vehicles used in such systems), and to prevent their incorporation in new or expanded transportation systems, and (B) to make housing available and accessible to individuals with disabilities or to meet sheltered housing needs; and (3) prepare plans and proposals for such further actions as may be necessary to the goals of adequate transportation and housing for individuals with disabilities, including proposals for bringing together in a cooperative effort, agencies, organizations, and groups already working toward such goals or whose cooperation is essential to effective and comprehensive action.

(d) Investigations; hearings; orders; administrative procedure applicable; final orders; judicial review; civil action; intervention; development of standards; technical assistance to persons or entities affected

(1) The Access Board shall conduct investigations, hold public hearings, and issue such orders as it deems necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Acts cited in subsection (b) of this section. Except as provided in paragraph (3) of subsection (e) of this section, the provisions of subchapter II of chapter 5, and chapter 7 of Title 5 shall apply to procedures under this section, and an order of compliance issued by the Access Board shall be a final order for purposes of judicial review. Any such order affecting any Federal department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States shall be final and binding on such department, agency, or instrumentality. An order of compliance may include the withholding or suspension of Federal funds with respect to any building or public conveyance or rolling stock found not to be in compliance with standards enforced under this section. Pursuant to chapter 7 of Title 5, any complainant or participant in a proceeding under this subsection may obtain review of a final order issued in such proceeding.

(2) The executive director is authorized, at the direction of the Access Board--

(A) to bring a civil action in any appropriate United States district court to enforce, in whole or in part, any final order of the Access Board under this subsection; and

(B) to intervene, appear, and participate, or to appear as amicus curiae, in any court of the United States or in any court of a State in civil actions that relate to this section or to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 [42 U.S.C.A. § 4151 et seq.].

Except as provided in section 518(a) of Title 28, relating to litigation before the Supreme Court, the executive director may appear for and represent the Access Board in any civil litigation brought under this section.

(3) Repealed.

(e) Appointment of executive director, administrative law judges, and other personnel; provisions applicable to administrative law judges; authority and duties of executive director; finality of orders of compliance

(1) There shall be appointed by the Access Board an executive director and such other professional and clerical personnel as are necessary to carry out its functions under this chapter. The Access Board is authorized to appoint as many administrative law judges as are necessary for proceedings required to be conducted under this section. The provisions applicable to administrative law judges appointed under section 3105 of Title 5 shall apply to administrative law judges appointed under this subsection.

(2) The Executive Director shall exercise general supervision over all personnel employed by the Access Board (other than administrative law judges and their assistants). The Executive Director shall have final authority on behalf of the Access Board, with respect to the investigation of alleged noncompliance and in the issuance of formal complaints before the Access Board, and shall have such other duties as the Access Board may prescribe.

(3) For the purpose of this section, an order of compliance issued by an administrative law judge shall be deemed to be an order of the Access Board and shall be the final order for the purpose of judicial review.

(f) Technical, administrative, or other assistance; appointment, compensation, and travel expenses of advisory and technical experts and consultants

(1)(A) In carrying out the technical assistance responsibilities of the Access Board under this section, the Board may enter into an interagency agreement with another Federal department or agency.

(B) Any funds appropriated to such a department or agency for the purpose of providing technical assistance may be transferred to the Access Board. Any funds appropriated to the Access Board for the purpose of providing such technical assistance may be transferred to such department or agency.

(C) The Access Board may arrange to carry out the technical assistance responsibilities of the Board under this section through such other departments and agencies for such periods as the Board determines to be appropriate.

(D) The Access Board shall establish a procedure to ensure separation of its compliance and technical assistance responsibilities under this section.

(2) The departments or agencies specified in subsection (a) of this section shall make available to the Access Board such technical, administrative, or other assistance as it may require to carry out its functions under this section, and the Access Board may appoint such other advisers, technical experts, and consultants as it deems necessary to assist it in carrying out its functions under this section. Special advisory and technical experts and consultants appointed pursuant to this paragraph shall, while performing their functions under this section, be entitled to receive compensation at rates fixed by the Chairperson, but not exceeding the daily equivalent of the rate of pay for level 4 of the Senior Executive Service Schedule under section 5382 of Title 5, including travel time, and while serving away from their homes or regular places of business they may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by section 5703 of such Title 5 for persons in the Government service employed intermittently.

(g) Reports to Congress; reports on transportation barriers and housing needs

(1) The Access Board shall, at the end of each fiscal year, report its activities during the preceding fiscal year to the Congress. Such report shall include an assessment of the extent of compliance with the Acts cited in subsection (b) of this section, along with a description and analysis of investigations made and actions taken by the Access Board, and the reports and recommendations described in paragraphs (8) and (9) of such subsection.

(2) The Access Board shall, at the same time that the Access Board transmits the report required under section 7(b) of the Act commonly known as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4157(b)), transmit the report to the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate.

(h) Report to President and Congress on assessments of State expenditures to provide full access to programs and activities; grants and contracts to aid Board in carrying out its functions; report to Congressional committees on accessibility of Federally funded buildings; joint transmittal

(1) The Access Board may make grants to, or enter into contracts with, public or private organizations to carry out its duties under subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

(2)(A) The Access Board may accept, hold, administer, and utilize gifts, devises, and bequests of property, both real and personal, for the purpose of aiding and facilitating the functions of the Access Board under paragraphs (5) and (7) of subsection (b) of this section. Gifts and bequests of money and proceeds from sales of other property received as gifts, devises, or bequests shall be deposited in the Treasury and shall be disbursed upon the order of the Chairperson. Property accepted pursuant to this section, and the proceeds thereof, shall be used as nearly as possible in accordance with the terms of the gifts, devises, or bequests. For purposes of Federal income, estate, or gift taxes, property accepted under this section shall be considered as a gift, devise, or bequest to the United States.

(B) The Access Board shall publish regulations setting forth the criteria the Board will use in determining whether the acceptance of gifts, devises, and bequests of property, both real and

personal, would reflect unfavorably upon the ability of the Board or any employee to carry out the responsibilities or official duties of the Board in a fair and objective manner, or would compromise the integrity of or the appearance of the integrity of a Government program or any official involved in that program.

(3) The Access Board shall, at the same time that the Access Board transmits the report required under section 7(b) of the Act entitled "An Act to ensure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designated and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968) [42 U.S.C.A. § 4157(b)] transmit that report to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives.

(I) Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated for the purpose of carrying out the duties and functions of the Access Board under this section such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 1993 through 1997.



**Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
(Public Law 101-336)
42 U.S.C. § 12204**

**§12204. Regulations by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers
Compliance Board**

(a) Issuance of guidelines

Not later than 9 months after July 26, 1990, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board shall issue minimum guidelines that shall supplement the existing Minimum Guidelines and Requirements for Accessible Design for purposes of subchapters II and III of this chapter.

(b) Contents of guidelines

The supplemental guidelines issued under subsection (a) of this section shall establish additional requirements, consistent with this chapter, to ensure that buildings, facilities, rail passenger cars, and vehicles are accessible, in terms of architecture and design, transportation, and communication, to individuals with disabilities.

(c) Qualified historic properties

(1) In general

The supplemental guidelines issued under subsection (a) of this section shall include procedures and requirements for alterations that will threaten or destroy the historic significance of qualified historic buildings and facilities as defined in 4.1.7(1)(a) of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards.

(2) Sites eligible for listing in National Register

With respect to alterations of buildings or facilities that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), the guidelines described in paragraph (1) shall, at a minimum, maintain the procedures and requirements established in 4.1.7(1) and (2) of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards.

(3) Other sites

With respect to alterations of buildings or facilities designated as historic under State or local law, the guidelines described in paragraph (1) shall establish procedures equivalent to those established by 4.1.7(1)(b) and (c) of the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and shall require, at a minimum, compliance with the requirements established in 4.1.7(2) of such standards.

Since 1973, the United States Access Board has been the only independent Federal agency whose primary mission is accessibility for people with disabilities.

The Access Board has 25 members. The President appoints thirteen members from the general public for four-year terms. The remaining twelve represent the departments of Commerce, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, Labor, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs; the General Services Administration and the Postal Service.

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